

# HAGGAI

## INTRODUCTION

The prophets to the returned remnant were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Haggai, the writer of this short book, is mentioned in [Ezra 5:1-2](#) and [Ezra 6:14](#) as one of the two prophets who encouraged the remnant (that returned after the Babylonian captivity) to rebuild the temple in spite of the difficulties that beset them on every hand. From this and the brief references that he made to himself in his prophecy, four things become apparent:

1. Haggai was self-effacing -- he exalted the Lord. He took the same position that John the Baptist took: "He must increase, but I must decrease" ([John 3:30](#)).
2. He was God's messenger. The expression "Thus saith the Lord" characterizes his message.
3. He not only rebuked the people; he also cheered and encouraged them in a marvelous way.
4. He not only preached; he also practiced.

Haggai begins his book by saying, "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month." Hystaspes (the Darius mentioned here) began to reign in 521 B.C., making the second year of his reign about 520 B.C. "The second year of Darius" enables the historian to pinpoint the time of this prophet in profane history. It is interesting to note that the post-Captivity prophets begin to date their prophecies according to the reign of gentile rulers. Those prophets who prophesied before the Captivity always tied the dates of their writings into the reign of either a king of Israel or a king of Judah or both. After the Captivity, since there was no king in either the northern or the southern kingdom, Haggai dates his prophecy according to a gentile king. The Lord Jesus said, ". . . Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" ([Luke 21:24](#)). In Haggai's day the "times of the Gentiles" had already begun (in fact, it began with the captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar). Since that time Jerusalem has been under gentile domination, and Haggai dates his prophecy accordingly.

The theme of Haggai is the temple. The reconstruction and refurbishing of the temple were the supreme passion of this prophet. He not only rebuked the people for their delay in rebuilding the temple, but he also encouraged them and helped them in this enterprise.

Haggai constantly referred to the "word of the LORD" as the supreme authority. He willingly humbled himself that the Lord might be exalted. His message was practical. It was as simple and factual as  $2+2=4$ . The prophecy of Haggai and the Epistle of James have much in common. Both put the emphasis upon the daily grind. Action is spiritual. A "do nothing" attitude is wicked. Both place this yardstick down upon life. Work is the measure of life.

Haggai's contemporary, Zechariah, was visionary and had his head in the clouds, but pragmatic Haggai had both feet on the ground. The man of action and the dreamer need

to walk together. [1Corinthians 15:58](#) can appropriately be written over this book: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

There are two key verses in this book: "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. . . . And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God" ([Hag. 1:8](#), [14](#)).

## Outline

The compass of this book is three months and fourteen days, according to the calendar. There are five messages in the book, and each was given on a specific date. The calendar furnishes the clue for the contents.

### I. September 1, 520 B.C., [Hag. 1:1-11](#)

A Challenge to the People

- A. A Charge of Conflict of Interest, [Hag. 1:1-4](#)
- B. A Call to Consider Their Ways, [Hag. 1:5-7](#)
- C. A Command to Construct the Temple, [Hag. 1:8-11](#)

### II. September 24, 520 B.C., [Hag. 1:12-15](#)

The Response to the Challenge

- A. Construction of the Temple; People Obeyed, [Hag. 1:12](#)
- B. Confirmation from God, [Hag. 1:13-15](#)

### III. October 21, 520 B.C., [Hag. 2:1-9](#)

The Discouragement of the People; The Encouragement of the Lord

### IV. December 24, 520 B.C., [Hag. 2:10-19](#)

An Appeal to the Law; The Explanation of the Principle

### V. December 24, 520 B.C., [Hag. 2:20-23](#)

A Revelation of God's Program; An Expectation for the Future

## Chapter 1

**THEME:** Challenge to the people; charge of conflict of interest; call to consider their ways; command to construct the temple; construction of the temple -- obedience of the people; confirmation from God

Haggai was a prophet to the restored remnant who returned to Jerusalem after the seventy-year captivity in Babylon. In the study of this Israel we will note how important it is to consider the historical books along with the prophetic books. There is a little cluster of books that belong together: Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther for the historical record; and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi for the prophetic section -- also, the Book

of Daniel probably should be studied first. These books belong together and constitute a unit.

### **Challenge To The People (1:1)**

Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during the same period, yet their approach was altogether different. They both challenged and encouraged the returned remnant to rebuild the temple and then to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. "Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them" ([Ezra 5:1-2](#)). So, you see, both Haggai and Zechariah are mentioned in this historical Book of Ezra as the two prophets who encouraged the people to rebuild the temple and also aided them in it. Also, in [Ezra 6:14](#) we read: "And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia."

### **Charge Of Conflict Of Interest (1:1-4)**

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying [[Hag. 1:1](#)].

"In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month" gives us the date of this prophecy, which is September 1, 520 B.C. according to the Jewish calendar. This is a book we can date very easily. As we said in the Introduction, the dating is according to the gentile ruler, Darius. The dating is no longer geared to the king of Israel or Judah because Haggai is writing during the "times of the Gentiles," which began with the Babylonian captivity and continues to the present day. The Lord Jesus said, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" ([Luke 21:24](#)).

"Came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet." We will find all the way through this little book that Haggai repeatedly refers to the Word of the Lord. He is making it clear that he is not speaking his own thoughts but is giving the Word of God to his people.

"Unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah." The name Zerubbabel means "sown in Babylon"; that is, he was born in captivity down in Babylon. It is actually a heathen name, by the way. He was in the line of David, the grandson of Jehoiachin (see [1Chron. 3:16-19](#)), and was appointed by Cyrus to be governor of Judah.

"And to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest." Joshua was the son of Jehozadak who was high priest at the time of the Babylonian invasion (see [1Chron. 6:15](#)). This man

was the religious head. So, you see, God is sending His message first to the leaders, the religious and civil rulers.

When the Israelites returned from Babylonian captivity to their own land, they returned with great anticipation, and their enthusiasm for rebuilding ran high. But they met gigantic obstacles which required herculean effort and hardships. After they had gone through a period like that, they were discouraged when they began to build the temple. The difficulties seemed insurmountable. Therefore they rationalized and decided that it was not the time to build. In other words, this was their pseudoconsolation. They decided to maintain the status quo. They said, "It is so hard, evidently God doesn't intend us to do it." They had laid the foundation of the temple, but the opposition of the Samaritans was so intense that they simply stopped building, and their excuse was, "Well, the time has not come."

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say. The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built [Hag. 1:2].

If you will read the Book of Nehemiah, you will see that, when they were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, the opposition was terrific. Well, they had the same kind of opposition in rebuilding the temple, and the people said, "Well, this is not the Lord's time to build it."

Notice that God says, "This people say" -- ordinarily He calls them My people, but not here. By this He doesn't mean that He has disowned them; He is just displeased with them. They are not in His will, and they are covering their disobedience with the pious-sounding excuse, "It is just not the right time to build the Lord's house."

What Haggai is going to say will hurt a little. He is going to stick the knife in the trouble spot that, by the way, touches the lives of many Christians. Have you ever heard people say that they had given up trying to do something or that they did not go someplace because it was not the Lord's will? They will sometimes say that the Lord directed them to do something else. Saying that it is the Lord's will to do this or not to do that is a Christian cliché that covers a multitude of sins. It is so easy, when things get hard and rough, to turn in a report to everyone that says, "The Lord wanted me to do something else." Many a preacher, when things got tough in his church, has said, "The Lord needs me somewhere else." My heart goes out to pastors who are really trying to serve God but are having trouble and end up saying, "The Lord is leading me elsewhere." When the Lord's people started building the temple and the going got rough, they said, "It's not the Lord's time to build."

I remember when we attempted to remodel the church in downtown Los Angeles, California, where I served as pastor. The church in its long history had never been remodeled, and the seats, which numbered four thousand, were built to take care of people who lived fifty or sixty years ago. We discovered that people today are about 2 1/2 inches wider than they were fifty years ago! We decided to put in new cushioned seats. Some of the very pious folk said, "We don't feel that money should be spent for cushions. We should give that money to missions." Now the majority of the people wanted the cushioned seats, and I did too, so I made a proposition to the congregation. I

said, "There are so many people enthusiastic about remodeling that they are going to give enough money to cushion their seat and yours too, so those of you who don't want to pay for cushioned seats can give your twenty-five dollars to missions. I hope that we can take an offering today for several hundred twenty-five dollar checks." Well, there were very few twenty-five dollar checks. Why? The truth was that the folk who were objecting to the cushioned seats never intended to give at all, and "missions instead of cushions" was their excuse. But what they said was, "It isn't God's will to have cushioned seats. The time hasn't come to remodel the church."

It was my privilege to remodel every church which I served as pastor. I never built a new church, but I remodeled each of them. And I always encountered the same problem. In each church there was a little group -- a very small group, thank God for that -- which didn't do anything, but they were good at criticizing. And the excuse was always the same -- "The money shouldn't be spent on us here; it should go to missions." Then they should have given it to missions, but they did not.

The crowd that Haggai is addressing rationalized in the same way. He is pulling the Band-Aid off and exposing the sore. And it isn't an "ouchless" Band-Aid -- it hurts, you may be sure of that.

Now here is message number one, given on September 1, 520 B.C. Notice that Haggai is giving the Word of the Lord.

Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? [[Hag. 1:3-4](#)].

These folk who said it was not time to build the Lord's house had all built their own houses -- it seemed the time to do that! And the Lord pointed out that their houses were "ceiled houses." This means that they were beautifully paneled; they were luxuriously built. And for fifteen years, while they had been building their elaborate homes, the Lord's house had been lying waste.

It is amazing, but I have found it true throughout my many years in the ministry, that a great many people say, "I feel it is God's will for me to help you in your ministry," and then when the going gets a little rough, say, "It doesn't seem to be the Lord's will for me to help at this time." You see, the minute that things become difficult, that is the time most people decide their resolve is not the Lord's will. But when it is something for their own selfish ends, they usually go ahead and do it, don't they? Most people are that way. We make the effort to accomplish that which will always be to our advantage.

In Haggai's day, how in the world were the people able to build their lovely paneled homes? Surely they encountered difficulties, but they were not willing to face the same difficulties to build the Lord's house. Their lame excuse was, "It's just not the Lord's will right now for us to do that."

Oh, I get so weary of hearing people give that excuse for not doing something for God! What do they know about the Lord's will? Just because something is difficult and hard and is going to cost you something, does that mean it is not the Lord's will? May I say to

you, that is not the way to interpret the Lord's will. Sometimes the Lord's will is very rugged. If we could just listen to the stories of some of God's choice saints of the past, they would tell us that God's will was not always a smooth path.

I wonder what Abraham would say to the people today who say, "It is not God's will for me to do this or that." Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees. This man who was to be the father of the Israelites was no doubt a good businessman. He had a nice business in Ur, a highly civilized city in those days and a prosperous one. It was a city of luxury. One day God said to Abraham, "I want you to leave Ur." It would have been easy for Abraham to rationalize, "I must have misunderstood the Lord. He would not ask me to leave this place. The life here is soft and easy. It couldn't be the Lord's will for me to leave this city."

There are literally thousands of missionaries on the mission field today who are making great sacrifices. Why? They do it because they believe it is God's will for them to be on the mission field. I wonder how many of us here at home should be on the mission field. I wonder how many church members there are today who are as busy as termites arranging social events that require no sacrifice or hardship, instead of standing up to the opposition and really getting out the Word of God.

Notice again that Haggai is making it clear that these are not his own words; they are the words of God.

I always feel bad when I am in a place like Mexico, and I see all of those ornate cathedrals and the people living in poverty around them. It is easy for us to point a finger and say, "That just isn't right." I agree that it isn't right, but neither is it right for a church to be in a state of disrepair. A church needs to be attractive in order to attract the sinner. One excuse I heard for a church being in such terrible shape was that the congregation gave all of its money to missions. A deacon in that church told me that the reason their church did not have a carpet on the floor or new pews was that all their money had gone to missions. When that deacon took me to his home, he treated me royally. He put me in a guest room that was nicer than any room I had ever been in. His home, I was told, cost over one hundred thousand dollars back in the old days. I have a notion it is worth a great deal more today. It was all I could do to keep quiet. I had to bite my tongue to keep from saying, "You believe in giving to missions, and you don't put a rug on the floor of your church, but look at your home! You could have been a little less lavish and still could have had money for missions and your church."

Let me ask you a question, friend: "How much are you spending on yourself, and how much are you doing for God?" That question gets close to us, doesn't it?

May I use another illustration concerning this subject? I went to dinner with a friend of mine who is a fine Christian layman. The dinner was rather expensive, and he left a generous tip for the waitress. Then we went to a church service that evening in order to hear a certain preacher. We heard a good sermon, and when the offering plate was passed, my friend put in one dollar, which was much less than he had given the waitress. I thought, My, he's not even tipping God! My friend, this gets right down to where we live.

The Israelites were saying, "It is just not the time for the Lord's house to be built." God says, "Then why is it time for your houses to be built?" There is a lot of hypocrisy in the church today. It is sickening to hear people boast about what they do for God when what they do for themselves is a thousand times more than what they are doing for God.

I told you that what Haggai has to say will hurt. He would never win a popularity contest. He is rather like an alarm clock. The alarm clock will never become the most treasured possession of the average American. It is an institution for our contemporary American society but not one that will win a loving cup or a popularity contest. We do not like to be awakened from a sound and restful sleep. The culprit who does it is a criminal, and he should be punished, not rewarded. There are manufacturers today who are making alarm clocks with pleasant sounds, but they are still alarm clocks. Today America is prosperous and powerful and comfortable and satisfied and satiated. We have come to a place where it is woe to anyone who disturbs us, sounds an alarm, blows a whistle, or turns on a siren. In one community a church was restrained from putting up chimes because it would wake up the people in the neighborhood on Sunday morning. If Paul Revere rode again today, he would be arrested for disturbing the peace. John the Baptist would lose his head, not for rebuking a king's sinful life but for being a rabble-rouser and a calamity-howler.

That is the reason God's prophets never won a popularity contest. They were stoned, not starved. And Haggai is an alarm clock. He wakes us up, and he disturbs us. We don't like that. And the people in his day didn't like it. They had just come out of the Babylonian captivity, and they didn't want to hear his message. Haggai occupied a very difficult position. He stood between a rock and a hard place. Yet he attempted to wake up his people to do something for God, and his method was very unusual, though not original by any means. Although his method is not being used in our day, I think it would still be effective in God's work.

### **Call To Consider Their Ways (1:5-7)**

Now God calls their attention to something which is very practical. This gets right down to the nitty-gritty of life.

Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways [[Hag. 1:5](#)].

"Consider your ways" is literally, set your heart upon your ways. Look at what is happening to you. Now He goes into detail --

Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways [[Hag. 1:6-7](#)].

God was judging them concerning their material things, and they were not recognizing it as His judgment. We see in the Book of Hebrews, "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" ([Heb. 12:7](#)). When God disciplines us, there is a reason for it. The child of God needs to consider his ways. He needs to examine his own heart to see why God is putting him through the mill

or using sandpaper on him. God wants to smooth the rough edges off our lives; so He does use sandpaper.

For the people of Israel there had been crop failure. There had been famine. There had been little money to buy clothes or food, and they had no savings account. But they never once attributed this to their disobedience. They were trying to explain it in other ways. What about God's children in our day? "Oh," they say, "that's just my luck." It is not luck if you are God's child. Difficulties come to you for a purpose. God won't let anything happen to you unless it has a purpose. God is trying to develop something valuable in your heart and life. That is why God said, "consider your ways." Man's ways always seem right to him. The writer of the Book of Proverbs says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" ([Prov. 14:12](#)). In [Isaiah 53:6](#) we read, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way . . ." (italics mine). The problem with mankind today is that we will want to go our own way. Again the writer of [Psalm 1](#) says, "For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" ([Ps. 1:6](#)).

Notice how the Word of God enlarges upon the things that reveal man's way as opposed to God's way: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" ([Isa. 55:7](#)). And in [Proverbs 13:15](#) He says that ". . . the way of transgressors is hard." It certainly is hard! Again in Isaiah He says, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" ([Isa. 55:9](#)). And then -- "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" ([Jer. 10:23](#)). Also, "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein" ([Jer. 6:16](#)). Man is in rebellion against God. In [Jeremiah 10:2](#) God says, ". . . Learn not the way of the heathen. . . ." And God says, ". . . This is the way, walk ye in it . . ." ([Isa. 30:21](#)). And the Lord Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" ([John 10:1-2](#)). He goes on to say, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" ([John 10:9](#)). How tremendous this is!

This is what God is saying to His people. He wants them to consider their ways. He wants them to set their hearts upon their ways. He asks, "Don't you see what is happening to you?"

Now let me ask you, "What way are you on today? What path are you taking? Where is that path leading you? Have you ever considered where drugs are going to lead you? It is a broad way where you start out, and you can do as you please, but that broad way is actually a funnel, and it grows narrower and narrower until there is only one little opening, which leads only to destruction. But God says that the way which leads to life is a narrow way -- Christ is that way; He is the only way to the Father. When you enter the narrow way, it becomes broader and broader as you go along until you can go in and out and find pasture. You will have life and have it abundantly. My friend, it is time to consider your ways. Set your heart upon your ways. Where are you headed today? How

is your marriage working out? If you are a young person in college, do you have a goal in life? If you are a young lady, how about the young man you are dating? Where is he leading you? What is going to happen to you? Why don't you consider your ways?

Folk from all walks of life write to me. Many are headed in the right direction; others very frankly say that they are on the wrong path, and they are suffering broken homes, broken hearts, and wrecked lives. God says, "Consider your ways."

### **Command To Construct The Temple (1:8-11)**

Now God is going to give them the solution to their problems. It is so simple, so clear that you may wonder why it is necessary to emphasize it. God gives them a command to construct the temple, and He tells them three things that they are to do. You see, the children of Israel had a conflict of interests. They had put their own homes before God's house. They were putting their selfish ends ahead of God's program. The Lord Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said that we are to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (see [Matt. 6:33](#)). That "righteousness" is in Christ. When you have Christ, you have everything -- you have all those things you are after. Money can be spiritual, depending on what you use it for. Your home can be spiritual if it is a place where God is honored. It can be a place where a testimony for the Lord is given, where friends can come and be refreshed, or where a Bible class can be taught. It can be a place as sacred as your church. The things that people are after today may not be wrong, but it is wrong when they put them first in their lives and use them for their own selfish ends.

Now God tells the people in Haggai's day what they are to do:

Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD [[Hag. 1:8](#)].

The solution is so simple -- there are only three things they are to do: (1) "Go up to the mountain, and" (2) "bring wood, and" (3) "build the house." I'll be honest with you, I wonder why some of the children of Israel had not realized this sooner. When people get that big "I" in front of their eyes, it obscures everything else, and they are blind to the things they should see. That which should be very simple becomes a very complex problem. People today say, "Life is so complicated. We need a psychiatrist. We need to get things straightened out." My friend, if you just put God in His rightful place, He will straighten out a great many things for you. But first, you must get the big "I" out of the way.

"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood." If you have visited the land of Israel, you may wonder about God's command to go up to the mountain and bring down trees since that land is almost denuded of trees today. For many years now Israel has been carrying on a project of tree planting. Although they have planted millions of trees, the hills still look bare to me. Very few of them have any sign of green on them. At one time that land was covered with trees, as this verse reveals. God wouldn't tell them to go up to the mountain and get wood if there were not wood up there. Then what happened to the trees? Well, when the enemy invaded Israel in B.C. 70, the forces of Rome not only destroyed the cities, they also denuded the land of trees. They cut down practically every tree.

Now notice again God's simple solution to their problems: (1) "Go up to the mountain, and" (2) "bring wood, and" (3) "build the house." Going up to the mountain, felling the trees, and making them into lumber would take work and a great deal of effort.

My friend, if you are not ready to go to work for the Lord, if you are not willing to do what God wants you to do -- whatever that might be -- Bible study is really not going to help you very much. God believes in work, and the message of this little Book of Haggai is the gospel of work.

As we have seen in this marvelous little book, first there was God's challenge to His people. They were kidding themselves that they were doing God's will. But the reason they had not built the temple was that they were just plain lazy. They tried to conceal that fact with the very pious platitude, "The time isn't right. It isn't the will of God to build at this time." God told them to get off their haunches and go to work. He said, "You have been attributing the fact that you have had bad crops and that things are difficult for you to other causes. You have been blaming your circumstances. Why don't you blame Me? I am the One who has sent trouble to you. I'm trying to wake you up." He tells them to consider their ways, to set their hearts on their ways. And now He says to get busy. He charged them with a conflict of interests, then He called them to consider their ways, and now He commands them to start to build the temple. And it is very simple, "Go to the mountain and bring down wood. You can't expect the logs to roll down to you. It is up to you to go to work."

There are so many voices today encouraging Christians to expect a miracle in their lives. They say, "God is going to deal with you by a miracle!" Well, I'm here to tell you that He is not. It would have been very easy for someone to have come along and to have told these Israelites to expect a miracle, but God says, "Go up there and bring down wood. Go to work." My friend, there is no easy shortcut in our service for God.

Very frankly, laziness is the reason Sunday school teachers don't succeed. Laziness is the reason preachers don't succeed. Laziness is the reason people fail in their Christian lives. You have to work at it. I do not think that the Holy Spirit will ever bless laziness.

In seminary I remember one of the students complaining to the professor, "Doctor, that book you assigned for us to read is really dry!" The professor looked up and smiled, "Well, dampen it with a little sweat from your brow." That's the way to do it, friend. Don't expect the Christian life to be handed to you on a silver platter. The miracle comes in the work that you do. God told His people in Haggai's day to go to work.

Dr. Frank Morgan has called it (1) the appeal to the mind. God told them at the very beginning, "You say it is not time to build God's house? I want you to think about that. How is it that you are living in fine houses?" That was His appeal to the mind. (2) He appealed to the heart. He called them to consider, to set their heart on this. They had not done so, but that was His challenge. (3) God gave them a command, and that command was an appeal to the will. "Go up, bring wood, and build" -- so simple yet so important.

My friend, roll up your sleeves, and let's go to work for God today. So many people are sitting on the sidelines. This is a day of spectator sports; but frankly, it is a day of spectator Christians also. They like to sit on the sidelines and watch somebody else do it.

Many a preacher is being worked to death. He is called upon to visit all the sick folk in his congregation. He does all the administrative work -- he is expected to supervise everything. What about you deacons? Why don't you go to work? What about you members of the church? Are you visiting the sick? The pastor is to train you to do the work of the ministry. He is not the one to do it all. The work should be divided and shared. The burden of the ministry should not fall on just a few folk. If you are a member of a local congregation, you should go to work. Work is something which is desperately needed in our churches today.

Let me illustrate what I mean. My first pastorate after I was ordained was my home church, the church in which I had been raised. One morning a deacon made a special trip to the study to talk with me. He said, "Vernon, I can't pray in public. I don't know why, but I can't do it. The fact of the matter is, I can't speak in public either. Don't ever call on me to speak or pray in public. If you do, I will embarrass you, and I will embarrass myself. I simply can't do either one of these things in public, and I can't seem to overcome the weakness." Tears were in his eyes as he spoke. Then he said, "But anytime anything needs to be done in this church, whether it is to replace a light bulb that has burned out or to put a new roof on the church, you can call on me. I will be glad to do it." Do you know what I did after that? If something needed repairing or remodeling around the church, I would call on him. Sometimes in less than an hour, a whole crew of men would be at the church to work, and that deacon would work right along with them. I learned very early that he was one of the most valuable members I ever had in a church. He was a Haggai. He believed in getting down to business and doing the work that needed to be done. Often I heard visiting speakers and others say, "My, this church is certainly kept up; what a lovely place to come and worship!" Do you know why that church looked so nice? A man in my church could not pray in public. Thank God he couldn't pray in public, because most churches have too many men who love to pray in public. We need people who are working people, too. We need people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work.

Actually, the Book of Haggai is too simple to be in God's Word. It should be a little bit more complicated. Haggai gave the people a sermon. He said, "Go up to the mountain." That is the first point. Then he said, "Bring down the wood." That is point number two. Then he said, "Build a house." That is the third point. Those were God's simple instructions. There was nothing more to say, but there was something to do.

Now God explains why the people of Israel had been having such a difficult time --

Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house [[Hag. 1:9](#)].

"And ye run every man unto his own house" indicates the zeal and enthusiasm with which they had been taking care of their own interests and building their own homes.

They had been wondering why all of these difficulties had come upon them, but they were too pious to blame God. They claimed that their bad luck was due to circumstances. It was a bad year. "We had a drought, you know," they would say. But God told them, "I

want you to know that I caused the drought. I saw to it that you were not successful in your different schemes, and I will tell you why I did it. It is because My house is lying in waste while every man improves his own home."

Let me repeat that the Lord Jesus stated the great principle in the Book of Haggai, which is applicable for all people of all ages, when He said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" ([Matt. 6:33](#)). When God is put first in our lives, all other things will take care of themselves. What a message this is! Yet it is so simple, I'm afraid we will miss it.

Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit [[Hag. 1:10](#)].

Naturally, when there was no rain, there were no crops. The wheat and the barley would not grow, and the vines would not produce. God says, "I turned off the spigot; I didn't give you any water."

In our contemporary society we don't interpret life like that. Because we live in a mechanical society, an electronic age, we blame our problems on someone's failure to push a button or on pushing the wrong button. I wonder if God would like to get through to America and say, "Look, has it ever occurred to you that I may be behind the problems you are having? Did it ever occur to you that I am trying to get your attention off things and onto Me?"

Notice that God takes the blame for all of these trials which have come upon Israel --

And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands [[Hag. 1:11](#)].

God is saying to them, "Material blessings have been withheld from you because I withheld them. I am responsible."

In our day, the tendency is to blame first the police -- they should have been on the job. Then we blame the mayor, we blame the legislature, and we blame Washington. Very possibly all of them are guilty. But, my friend, has it occurred to you that you yourself are to blame? Although we blame men and machines for the conditions of the world, God has brought it all to pass. Do you want to blame Him? Go ahead. He told Israel that He was responsible. But He also told them why. They had neglected Him. You see, the solution to our problems is very simple; yet it is complicated. We think that if we put in a new method or a new machine or a new man, our problems will be solved. My friend, why don't we recognize what our problem really is, who caused it, and how it can be solved?

Now Haggai tells us the response to the challenge which God has given to the people of Israel.

### **Construction Of The Temple -- Obedience Of The People (1:12)**

Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai

the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD [[Hag. 1:12](#)].

Zerubbabel is the governor, Joshua is the high priest, and "all the remnant of the people" refers to the people who returned to the land of Israel from Babylonian captivity.

Notice that they did two things: (1) They obeyed God. As Samuel the prophet had said to a disobedient king, ". . . to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" ([1Sam. 15:22](#)). And the apostle John put it this way, ". . . if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" ([1John 1:7](#)). You see, we must walk in the light of the Word of God, and the Word will humble us and show us our failures. A great many of us don't like to have them called to our attention; but if we will recognize them and deal with them, we will find that the blood of Jesus Christ will just keep on cleansing us from all sin, and we will have fellowship with God. So we see that the people of Israel obeyed God.

Also (2) they feared God. The writer of Proverbs says that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom . . ." ([Prov. 9:10](#)).

It is significant that the leaders of the people, Zerubbabel and Joshua, are mentioned first in their obedience to God. The need today in our country is for obedient Christians in places of leadership. William Gladstone, the famous British statesman, was asked what was the mark of a great statesman. His reply was that a statesman is a man who knows the direction God is moving for the next fifty years. Well, we don't seem to have men in leadership who know the direction God is moving for the next fifty minutes. Oh, how we need men who really know God and are being led by Him!

### **Confirmation From God (1:13-15)**

When they obey God and fear Him, they receive this wonderful confirmation from Him.

Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD [[Hag. 1:13](#)].

He says, "I am with you." How wonderful! You remember that the Lord Jesus said to His own, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." And notice that the promise of His presence rested upon their obedience: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [the age]. Amen" ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)). He didn't say that He will be with you if you sit on your haunches and don't do anything for God. He didn't promise to be with you there. He said that He will be with you when you obey Him. That is the place of blessing and of fellowship. And you can't have anything better than that.

Now notice that the leaders enter enthusiastically into the work.

And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of

Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God [[Hag. 1:14](#)].

It is pretty important to see the leadership of the nation in action. Zerubbabel was the civil leader, the governor. He was in the kingly line and was the son of Shealtiel, whose name means "asking of God in prayer." And Joshua, the high priest, was the son of Josedech (Jehozadak) who was high priest at the time of the Babylonian invasion. So we see here the civil and religious leaders joining in with the people in doing the work of the Lord.

This second message was given, and Haggai dates it --

In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king [[Hag. 1:15](#)].

This is September 24, 520 B.C. The first message, as we have seen, was given on September 1, 520 B.C. -- that was when God challenged them. They had responded to the challenge, had come together, had organized the project, were cutting down trees, were making them into lumber, and had started to build the temple. Now, twenty-four days later, Haggai gives them this second message from God, the assurance of His presence.

Haggai was an orderly man, as his book indicates. He was also an administrator. He was a man who was right down to earth. He helped the people rebuild the temple, and as they worked together he continually encouraged and challenged them in their work. The results would be great. God would be pleased, and God would be glorified.

## Chapter 2

**THEME:** Discouragement of the people; encouragement of the Lord; appeal to the Law; explanation of the principle; revelation of God's program; expectation for the future

In the second chapter we see the discouragement of the people and the encouragement of the Lord. The obvious inferiority of the second temple to the temple of Solomon became a cause of discouragement, but God responded to it.

### Discouragement Of The People (2:1-9)

In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying [[Hag. 2:1](#)].

Notice that this took place in the seventh month -- the previous time they heard God's message of encouragement was in the sixth month. So now they had been working for a month. They had spent about twenty-four days getting organized, and now the temple is beginning to go up. There is great enthusiasm as they see their progress. And they remember God's encouraging, "I am with you."

Now we come to the second item of discouragement.

Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying [[Hag. 2:2](#)].

This message is directed to the same group of people whom God had encouraged in the previous chapter, the same leaders and the same people.

Now here is the second hurdle which Haggai had to clear as he prophesied to these folk --

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? [[Hag. 2:3](#)].

Many of these who had returned from the Babylonian captivity could remember -- although they had been very young at the time -- the beauty and the richness of Solomon's temple. This little temple which they were putting up looked like a tenant farmer's barn in Georgia in comparison to the richness and glory of Solomon's temple. Although Solomon's temple had not been a large temple, as temples go, they could remember its ornate richness, the jewels, the gold, and the silver which had been put into it. Before inflation the estimated value of the materials that went into Solomon's temple varied between five million and twenty million dollars -- that is quite a difference, of course, but in that day either five or twenty million dollars was quite a sum of wealth. That temple had been like a beautiful little jewel box.

Now let me draw your attention again to the dating of this third message from God: "the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month." If you check this date in [Leviticus 23](#), you will find that it was the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the final feast of ingathering for the Jews. I am of the opinion that the builders had really pushed and speeded up their building in order to get the temple as far along as possible in order to use it for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. So when some of the old-timers came into it and saw the lack of beauty and richness which had characterized Solomon's temple, they were disappointed. As you know, any kind of structure, whether it is a home or a great office building, doesn't look very impressive before it is completed. You have to wait until the building is finished to really appreciate it. But this little temple in Haggai's day, even when it was finished, was no comparison to Solomon's temple. And there was a mixed reaction to it.

The Book of Ezra, [Ezra 3:8-13](#), gives us more background as to what went on at this time: "Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his son, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for

his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid."

It may have been just the foundation and a few uprights, but they had to celebrate it. Ezra's record continues -- "But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."

You see, amid all of the shouts of joy there was another sound -- a weeping and howling by those who were making a comparison between the two. They were saying, "Look, this little temple that you are putting up here doesn't amount to a hill of beans. In comparison to Solomon's temple, it doesn't amount to anything." This internal criticism was like a wet blanket on the celebration of the construction of the new temple. It dulled the edge of the zeal to rebuild the temple. It poured cold water on the enthusiasm generated by the prodding of Haggai. If you want to dampen a project, all you have to say is, "You think this is great, but you should have seen the original back in the good old days."

When I was a boy, I remember some of the adults talking about the good old days. Well, I don't remember any good old days when I was a boy -- those days when I was growing up were hard. I remember the first little church I served in Georgia. It was a little white building sitting on a red clay hill. During my first year there as a student pastor I preached a series of evangelistic messages on the Book of Revelation. I haven't been able to do that again in my ministry, but I did it then, and God blessed. Many young people were saved. On the Sunday night of the final message some of us sat on the steps of the church because it was a warm Georgia evening -- most of us were young people -- and we were talking about what a wonderful meeting it had been. There was one old man there with whiskers like Methuselah. He said, "You've had some good meetings, young man, but I remember. . . ." When someone starts that, you are headed for the toboggan, and soon you're on the downhill run. He took us for quite a ride down the hill. He told us, "When I was a young man, we really had a meeting here!" As he told us about the meeting, ours seemed pretty small compared to his, although I learned later that he exaggerated a little. Yet what he said was discouraging.

And in Haggai's day the folk, who had been so enthusiastic about the temple they were building, became discouraged.

How is God going to meet this situation? Well, I'll tell you how we in the church would handle it. We would appoint a committee to see what could be done. As someone has said, a committee is a group of people who individually can do nothing and who collectively decide that nothing can be done. Or, as another has said, a committee is a group of incompetents, appointed by the indifferent, to do the unnecessary. Having been a pastor for many years, I am confident that we would use the committee approach to handle this problem. But that is not the way God solved it. He faced the problem squarely and came up with a very simple solution.

Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts [[Hag. 2:4](#)].

God's challenge is twofold here. First, He says, "Be strong," three times. He says be strong to the civil ruler. He says be strong to the religious ruler. Then when He speaks to the people, does He have something new for them? No, it's the same thing -- be strong. Now that is very simple, but it is very important.

My friend, you and I live in a big, bad world today. What is our encouragement? God's work in many places is small and doesn't seem to amount to very much. What is the solution? Well, here is God's answer to us: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" ([Eph. 6:10](#)). We need to recognize that we can't do anything but that God can do a great deal. Be strong in the Lord. How wonderful that is.

Also in [Hebrews 11:34](#) it says that believers "Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong . . ." (italics mine). Doesn't God say that He chooses the weak things of the world? God does not choose these big, ornate buildings. He doesn't choose these beautiful mausoleums that have steeples on top of them. Nothing very great is happening in places like that, but things are really jumping in some suburban areas, and many of the smaller churches are packed. I know what I am talking about because I have had the privilege of going across this country several times since I have retired, and this is what I have seen. I have also been abroad several times. I visited one of the great churches in London, England. At one time that church was filled with several thousand people three times a week on a regular basis. When I visited the church on a Sunday night, there were not more than two hundred people in attendance. That great imposing building with its impressive name was not very formidable any more. This same thing is true in my own nation. I have been in some of our great churches, and, my, the amount of lumber I can see in the pews -- but nobody is sitting in them. Yet when I go out to some of our small churches, I find that they are packed to the doors and are having two and three morning services.

Today we are to be strong in the Lord. This is repeated many times in the Word of God. Paul, writing to a young preacher, said, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" ([2Tim. 2:1](#), italics mine). The Epistle of 2 Timothy is Paul's swan song, and in his final message to this son in the faith, he is saying, "You are a son of God. Be strong now." What a word of encouragement that should be.

Somebody says, "My ministry is so insignificant and my group is so small that I don't think it amounts to very much." My friend, if that is what you are thinking, it is the Devil who is talking to you. Don't listen to him. It is God who is going to put the measuring rod down on it and determine who is great and who is not. There are a whole lot of straw stacks being built today, and they look impressive. I myself have always been fearful that I was building a straw stack. Oh, I know there is some gold in it, but have you ever tried to find a needle in a straw stack? How will you find a little piece of gold that is the same color as the straw? God makes it clear that size is not the important thing.

God is saying to you and me, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" ([1Cor. 16:13](#)). Paul wrote this to a bunch of baby Christians over in Corinth. He was urging them to get out of the crib, get out of their high chairs, and grow up. Be strong in the Lord. Oh, how we need that sort of thing in God's work, my friend.

Paul wasn't through with the Corinthians -- he wrote a second letter to them in which he said, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)" ([2Cor. 10:4](#), italics mine).

It was my privilege to pastor a downtown church in Los Angeles and to have succeeded some great men. Although I may not have approved of everything they had done, I certainly had great respect for them. They were great preachers. Dr. R. A. Torrey had been the founder of that church. I never walked into that pulpit without first looking to God and saying, "Lord, I am unable, I am insufficient for this task. I call upon You today." I say to you that I am thanking God that out of weakness He can make us strong. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. And I told God many times, "Lord, if anything happens here today, You will have to do it because You and I know that this poor boy can't do it at all."

In [2Corinthians 10:5-6](#), Paul goes on to say, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." In other words, make very sure you are being obedient to God. It doesn't make any difference how large or how small the work is. We need to remember, "Be strong." God said to Israel, "Sure, this temple is not as impressive as the other temple was. I know that, but be strong. That is my challenge to you." He said three times, "Be strong!"

God's second word of challenge was "and work." Just keep at the job. Let God be the One to determine who is doing the greatest work. When we get to heaven and stand in the presence of Christ, I suspect that we will find out that there were people who were greater than Luther in Luther's day, greater than Wesley in Wesley's day, greater than Billy Sunday in his day, and greater than Billy Graham in his day. I used to tell the pastoral staff at the Church of the Open Door, "Someday when we stand before God, He may call some woman to come forward and say, 'This woman was a member of the Church of the Open Door while Vernon McGee was pastor, and she is the most honored one. I am going to reward her.' I'll nudge you fellows and ask if you knew her. You all will say, 'No, we never heard of her.' She is one of the unknown members. All she had was only one little boy. Her husband deserted her, and she raised that boy alone. Then she sent him to the mission field and, my, what a work he did! She was faithful. She didn't have the opportunity to speak to thousands, but she had the opportunity of speaking to one, and that is all God asked her to do." My friend, I think we are going to get our eyes opened in that day when we stand in His presence. He says, "Be strong and work." We are to be faithful at the task which God has given us to do.

Now here is God's glorious word of encouragement: "For I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts."

The fact of the matter is that the Shekinah glory had departed from the temple of Solomon long before the temple was destroyed. I have always taken the position that the Shekinah glory departed in the days of King Manasseh. He was a ruler who sinned so wickedly that the nation of Israel sank lower than it ever had gone before. If the Shekinah glory did not leave during his reign, I can't figure out any other time afterward that it would have been more inclined to leave. If I am correct in this, the Shekinah glory, which was the visible presence of God Himself, had left the temple about one hundred twenty-five years before the temple was destroyed by Babylon. Therefore, in Haggai's day, the old men, the ancients, who had seen Solomon's temple, had seen only its outward glory. The Shekinah glory had long since gone.

There is no doubt that the outward glory of Solomon's temple was tremendous. As you know, the Mosque of Omar stands on that temple site now, and its dome is gold. I have been told that it is gold leaf. Whether that is true or not, it is really a thing of beauty. I have looked at that dome from the Mount of Olives, and I could have looked at it from Zion. I have looked at it from the tower of a Lutheran church, and I have looked at it from hotel windows -- my, how it shines! As I looked at that pagan mosque, I thought of how Solomon's temple must have looked in the bright sunlight of that semidesert air. We know that it was a very ornate, rich temple and that the boards were covered with real gold. How beautiful it must have been! Of course there was no comparison between it and the temple which was then under construction, but God considered Zerubbabel's temple in the different stages of its construction -- Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple, and later Herod's temple -- as one house, not three houses. Therefore it is in the same line as the house (called Herod's temple) into which the Lord Jesus Christ would come. Christ was the Shekinah glory. He was God manifest in the flesh. The apostle John said, ". . . we beheld his glory . . ." ([John 1:14](#)) -- but it was veiled in human flesh. And the Lord Jesus walked into that temple not one time but many times.

So God says to these discouraged builders in the days of Haggai, "Yes, this little temple you are building is not much, but I am with you." My friend, that is a great deal better than having a magnificent temple without God being there. This is the same contrast between that contemporary big church with empty pews -- cold, indifferent, and dead -- and the little church around the corner packed with people and with a faithful pastor teaching the Word of God. We need to get a correct perspective of what is real and what is not real, what God is blessing and what He is not blessing.

According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not [[Hag. 2:5](#)].

Though this new building was not impressive, God says, "My spirit remaineth among you." That was a great deal better than a very ornate temple which was devoid of the presence of God.

This reveals the difference between the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament and New Testament times. In that day He was among the people. In our day He is in believers. He has certainly changed positions. This is one of the great benefits we have as believers in Christ.

"Fear ye not." If they had no reason to fear, certainly the child of God today should not fear.

For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts [[Hag. 2:6-7](#)].

First of all, we need to recognize what God is doing here. He is attempting to get their minds and hearts and eyes off that which is local, that which is very limited, and get their eyes fixed upon God's program for the people of Israel. He wants them to see what is out yonder in the future -- extending all the way into the Millennium.

My friend, for us today it is so easy to get the wrong perspective of the Christian life. We get our nose pressed right up to the window of the present, and we don't see anything else. As you know, you can put a dime so close to your eye that it blots out the sun. Well, a dime is like the present that blots out God's plan and purpose for our life. Don't be discouraged because present circumstances are not working out for you. Recognize that for the child of God, ". . . all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" ([Rom. 8:28](#)). That is, "the good" is out yonder in the distance.

"I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." In other words, God intends to move in judgment. We are going to see, before we finish this little Book of Haggai, that God is looking forward and speaking of the Great Tribulation, which is the Day of the Lord, and later of the coming of Christ to the earth and the setting up of the millennial temple, events which are also included in the Day of the Lord.

"I will fill this house with glory." Although it was a series of houses -- Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple (which was torn down by Herod), and Herod's temple -- God saw it as one house. And into that temple came the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory was there, although in human flesh. Then Herod's temple was destroyed (even before it was finished) in B.C. 70 by the forces of Rome under Titus. On that temple site no other temple has been built from that time to this. Actually, the Mosque of Omar stands there today, and the Islamic world would never permit it to be removed because it is either the second or third holiest spot in the world of Islam. However, later there will be built the temple which will be designated as the Great Tribulation temple. And after that, the millennial temple will be built on that site. Therefore, seeing it as one house, God says that the day is coming when "this house" will be filled with glory. I believe that the shekinah glory will come with Christ when He returns to the earth. In [Matthew 24:30](#) we read, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." This verse speaks of the sign of the Son of man in heaven, then immediately speaks of the glory of the Lord. I believe that His glory, the shekinah glory, will be seen in the temple which we designate as the great tribulation temple. But when He comes to

occupy it, it won't be a Great Tribulation temple that is in rebellion against Him. There won't be in it the image of Antichrist, but Christ Himself will be present there.

"I will shake all nations." Today it is difficult to believe that there will be more shaking than there has been in the past century. This century was practically ushered in by World War I. That was rather world-shaking. And there have been earthshaking events since then. There was a worldwide depression. There was World War II. Also, oil crises and energy shortages have shaken all nations, but all of these things are nothing compared to the shaking that will come in the future.

"The desire of all nations shall come." The commentators from the very beginning, in fact, the early church fathers, interpreted "the desire of all nations" to be Christ. Frankly, that has disturbed me from the time I was a younger preacher, because I never could believe that Christ was the desire of all nations. There are those who interpret the desire of all nations to be the longing of all nations for the Deliverer, whether or not they realize that the Deliverer is Christ. This may be true, but whom are they going to accept when he comes? They will accept Antichrist. Antichrist is the world's messiah, the world's savior, and they will accept him. I do not think that the nations have any desire for the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is my feeling that the meaning of this passage becomes clear if we continue reading. Now, let's put [verses 7-8](#) together:

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts [[Hag. 2:7-8](#)].

What is the desire of all nations? It is silver and gold. In our day many nations have had to go off the gold standard. When they did this, the economic foundation of the entire world was rocked. Why? Because there still is a desire for gold and silver. When Solomon's temple was built, from five to twenty million dollars worth of precious metals and jewels were used in its construction. It was very valuable. As you read the historical record in Kings and Chronicles, it seems as if Solomon had cornered the gold market in his day. When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem, all that wealth was taken away. You may remember that in [2Kings 20:12-17](#) the record tells of ambassadors who came from the king of Babylon to the king of Judah (which was Hezekiah at that time), and the king of Judah showed them all his treasures, all the wealth of Jerusalem. They made note of it, and in due time they captured Jerusalem and moved all that gold to Babylon. Certainly gold was the desire of the nation of Babylon, and it is still the desire of the nations of the world.

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine." All the silver and gold in the world belong to God, and there will be plenty of it to adorn God's house in the future. The future millennial temple will be, I am confident, a thing of beauty.

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts [[Hag. 2:9](#)].

"The glory of this latter house" is, rather, "the latter glory of this house." Remember that God views the series of temples as one house, and He is saying that the latter glory of this house, which will be that of the millennial temple, will be greater than the former. It will be even greater than Solomon's and certainly greater than the temple they were then building.

"In this place" designates the temple area as the site of the house in all of its stages.

"In this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts." I never visit Jerusalem without going to the temple area. Although I have seen it at least a dozen times, I still like to go there. Do you know why? It is because at that spot there will be accomplished what the United Nations and the League of Nations failed to do, which is to bring peace to the earth. When Jesus Christ comes to this earth, His feet will touch down on the Mount of Olives, and when He enters that temple area, peace will come to this earth, for He is the Prince of Peace. He will bring world peace at that time. The "peace" to which He refers in the verse before us means finally that.

This peace, however, could also include the peace which He brought at His first coming. At that time He brought peace to men of good will; that is, to men who were rightly related to God. As the apostle Paul put it, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ([Rom. 5:1](#)). He also brought the peace that passes all understanding, which is for the Christian heart today. He came the first time to bring that kind of peace.

In a day which is yet future He will bring world peace, the kind of peace which this world wants and needs.

So the "desire of all nations" is not Christ. I believe that the proper word is treasure -- the treasure of all nations. He said, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," speaking of material treasure. The thought seems to be that the lack of adornment in Zerubbabel's temple would be more than compensated for by the rich treasures which are going to be brought in the day when the millennial temple will be built. Therefore, this passage looks forward to the final days when the millennial Kingdom will be established here on earth. God was encouraging the discouraged builders of Haggai's day to see their temple in the perspective of the ultimate purpose of God.

Oh, that you and I might see our present circumstances in that same way! We need to look at them in the light of eternity and to look at them in the light of God's purpose for us. If God be for us, who can be against us? Hallelujah! Let's not be overcome nor overwhelmed by the circumstances of the moment.

I think of that preacher in Scotland who turned in his resignation at the end of the year. When the elders asked him why, he said, "Because we haven't had any conversions this year except wee Bobbie Moffat." Well, my friend, that discouraged preacher couldn't see that "wee Bobbie Moffat" would become Robert Moffat, the great missionary to Africa, who probably did as much if not more than David Livingstone in opening Africa to Christian missions. That year, which the preacher considered a failure, was probably the greatest year of his ministry. All of us need to see things in light of God's plan and purpose for our lives.

## Appeal To The Law (2:10-13)

In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying [[Hag. 2:10](#)].

This now, is the fourth message that God gives to Haggai. Notice again how the dating is geared into the reign of Darius, a gentile ruler, because there was no king on the throne of either Israel or Judah. The date is December 24, 520 B.C. The previous message was given in the seventh month; this message was given in the ninth month.

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,

If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

Then said Haggai, if one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean [[Hag. 2:11-13](#)].

You see, on December 24, 520 B.C., Haggai went to the priests and asked them two questions. Putting it very simply, these are the questions: (1) If that which is holy touches that which is unholy, will it make the unholy holy? The answer is no. (2) If that which is unclean touches that which is clean (holy), will the unclean make it unclean (unholy)? The answer is yes, that is what it will do.

Now these questions are important; so let's get the background before us. There were many facets of everyday life in Israel which were not covered in detail by the Mosaic Law. There were involved situations and there were knotty and thorny problems which arose in their daily lives, and there was nothing specific given in the Law which would adequately cover them. Then how did Israel function under the Law when there was no specific law to govern certain situations? Well, there is a case in point in [Numbers 27](#) regarding the inheritance of Zelophehad's daughters. The Mosaic Law had made no inheritance provision when a man had daughters but no sons. Zelophehad didn't have any sons, but he had a house full of girls. When their father died, the girls went to Moses and said, "Look here, what about our father's property? The Law says that sons are to inherit, but our father had no sons; he had only girls. So we should have the property." Maybe Moses was not too enthusiastic about this women's lib movement; so he took the matter to the Lord. Well, it is quite interesting to see that the Lord was on the side of the girls. He said, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right; thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren." So this took care of that particular question.

God made adequate provision for justice under the Law. This is the way it worked: When a matter arose that was not covered by the Law, they were to appeal to the priests. [Deuteronomy 17:8-11](#) says: "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; And thou shalt do according to the

sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: According to the sentence of the law which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left." When a certain situation arose that was not covered by the Law, the people were to appeal to the priest; he would make a decision, and his decision became the law for cases which dealt with the same issue. That was God's method, and it seems to me that we follow this same method today. I once took a course in commercial law, and although I don't remember much of what was taught, I do recall the difference between what is known as statute law and what is known as common law. Statute law is that which is passed by the legislature. When a certain bill comes before that body of lawmakers and is passed, it becomes statute law. That law is written down and stands as law. There are so many statute laws that I am sure no one person knows all of them.

There is also that which is known as common law. For example, a matter is brought into court. Let's say it is the case of John Doe versus Mary Roe. The lawyer for each side of the case looks for a similar case in the books, one that has already been tried, because there is nothing on the statute books that covers that specific issue. So finally they find a similar case that was decided years ago by Judge Know-It-All in Washington. Such decisions which were handed down by courts are known as common law. Therefore, we have two kinds of law: statute law and common law.

And this is the provision God made for Israel. Not every specific case was covered by the Mosaic Law, although great principles were laid down. The priests were to know the Old Testament, and when a case arose which was not covered specifically by the Law, the people were to bring the matter before the priests for a decision. And the priests would interpret the Mosaic Law for the people according to the great principles found in the Word of God.

### **Explanation Of The Principle (2:14-19)**

Keep in mind that in the Book of Haggai we have come to the post-Captivity period. God's people had already spent seventy years in captivity in Babylon. Only a small remnant had returned to the land, and those people were discouraged. God raised up three prophets to encourage them; and, since Haggai was the very practical prophet, God sent him to the priests to ask the two questions which were not specifically covered by the Mosaic Law.

Remember that when the captives first returned to Jerusalem, they had the enthusiasm to build, but after fifteen years in the debris of Jerusalem and with their enemies outside, they had done nothing about building the temple. They consoled themselves because they had lost their esprit de corps; and sinking into complacency, they were saying, "It's not time to build the Lord's house," and so they did nothing about building it. Haggai spoke into this situation. He encouraged the people; they began to build, and then some of the old-timers, who had seen the first temple, began to weep and say, "This little temple isn't worth anything." However, for three months the people worked. Then a mercenary spirit entered in, and the people said, "You told us to go to work and build the temple, and if we did, God would bless us. We have obeyed, but God is not blessing us." It was at this juncture that God sent Haggai to the priests with a twofold inquiry. It is actually one

question with two facets. Here are the questions and the answers he received: Is holiness communicated by contact? "No," is the answer. The holy cannot make the unholy holy by contact. Holiness is noncommunicable. Is unholiness communicated by contact? "Yes," is the answer. Uncleaness is communicated to the clean by contact. When holy and unholy come in contact, both are unholy. In therapeutics, measles is communicated by contact. In the physical realm, dirty water will discolor clean water -- not the opposite. In the moral realm, the evil heart of man cannot perform good deeds. In the religious realm, a ceremony cannot cleanse a sinner.

For God's application of this principle to Israel, we'll have to move ahead to pick up [verse 17](#): "I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD." God says that when the remnant returned to the land, they didn't turn to Him. They went through the rituals, and they brought sacrifices, and they expected God to bless them, but He did not. Religion, you see, is not a salve you can rub on the outside. Friend, you can swim in holy water, and it won't make you holy. You can go through a ritual, you can be baptized in water and be held under until you drown, but that won't make you a child of God. We sometimes put too much emphasis on a rite. Don't misunderstand me, I think baptism is very important, but it does not impart holiness. It will not change a man's heart.

Now let's look at the second inquiry again: "If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?" And the priests gave this answer: "It shall be unclean." Perhaps the key passage that deals with this matter is [Leviticus 22:4-6](#). The Word of God is quite specific. Uncleaness is communicable; unholiness is transferable.

An evil heart cannot perform good deeds. A bitter fountain cannot give forth sweet water. Grapes are not gathered from thorns. Figs do not come from thistles.

There is a syllogism in philosophy where you state a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. In the Book of Haggai the major premise is this: holiness is not communicated. The minor premise is this: unholiness is communicated. The conclusion is that when the holy and unholy come into contact, both are unholy. The Lord Jesus Christ asked the question, ". . . Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" ([Matt. 7:16](#)). As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. An act or a ritual cannot change the heart. A good deed is actually tarnished when an evil heart performs it. This is ceremonial law, friend, but it is applicable to every phase of life -- just like the law of gravitation, it is universal.

Let's go into a chemistry lab. I fill two large beakers with water. One container I fill with good, clear, clean water, and the other one I fill with the dirtiest water possible. I begin to pour the clean water into the unclean water. How long will I have to pour the clean water into the dirty water before it becomes clear? I will never make the dirty water clean by pouring clean water into it. What happens when I put one drop of the dirty, black water into the clean water? The clean water becomes unclean. So it is in the material world.

In the world of medicine, how do you cure the measles, and how do you get the measles? Do you take a well boy and have him rub up against the sick boy to make him well? Will that cure the boy with the measles? Of course it won't. What happens? The boy who was well will probably have a good case of the measles.

This principle is also true in the moral realm. The liquor industry gives money to charity, and the race track has a day in which they give all their proceeds to charity. Hollywood produces biblical stories, and we are supposed to applaud them -- well, you might applaud, but I won't. The liquor industry can never cover up the awful thing it is doing to human lives by giving a few dollars to charity. Why? Because, when a clean thing and an unclean thing come together, the unclean always makes the clean unclean. May I say to you, young man and young woman, you cannot run with the wrong crowd and stay clean. If you are running with an unclean crowd, one of these days you are going to find out it has rubbed off on you. If you are going to play in the mud, you are going to get dirty.

And this great principle certainly holds true in the religious realm. Most of the religions in the world teach that if you go through their prescribed rituals and ceremonies, you are acceptable to God. However, the Word of God is clear on the fact that going through a ceremony -- baptism or any other rite -- or doing anything externally will not meet the conditions which God has put down for man.

After all, man's condition is a sad one. We read in [Jeremiah 17:9](#), "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" What a picture this is of the human heart! No one but God can know how bad it is. If we could see ourselves as God sees us, we could not stand ourselves. We don't realize how bad we really are. The Lord Jesus made this abundantly clear in [Matthew 15:18-20](#), "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the ear. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." Just because you wash your hands, have been through a ceremony, or have performed a ritual does not make you right with God, you see.

I often think of a man I played golf with several years ago in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He told me, "I was a church hypocrite for years. I was a member of a big downtown liberal church. I had been through the ceremonies and had served on every committee. To tell the truth, I was not a Christian, and during the week I was practicing things which no Christian should do. I was a typical hypocrite. Then one day I found out that I was a sinner and needed a Savior. That is the thing that transformed my life." You see, the heart must be changed. Listen to the Lord Jesus as He talks along this line: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit [this is the principle at work]. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" ([Matt. 7:16-20](#)). Out of the heart proceed the issues of life. The heart must be changed.

Shakespeare had it right when he portrayed Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, rubbing her little hand, and exclaiming, "Out, damned spot! out, I say! . . . Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." How true! Neither can all the perfumes of Arabia make the heart right with God.

Trying to make yourself acceptable with God through ceremonies and all of that sort of thing is like pouring a gallon of Chanel No. 5 on a pile of fertilizer out in the barnyard in

an effort to make it clean and fragrant. My friend, it won't work. The apostle Peter said to Simon the sorcerer, ". . . thy heart is not right in the sight of God" ([Acts 8:21](#)). God demands a clean heart. In [Ephesians 6:6](#) God speaks of ". . . doing the will of God from the heart." And in [Hebrews 10:22](#), "Let us draw near with a true heart. . . ." How can a man's heart be made clean when his heart by nature is unclean? Is there something man can do to make his heart clean? No! This is rather like the sign I saw in a dry cleaner's shop in a certain city back East which read: "We clean everything but the reputation." Believe me, that is something you can't get cleaned on earth. The writer of the Book of Proverbs asks the question, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" ([Prov. 20:9](#)).

Well, God has the prescription: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" ([Isa. 1:18](#)). Peter wrote, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" ([1Pet. 1:18-19](#)). One song asks the question, "What can wash away my sin?" That same song answers the question -- "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." That is one of the greatest principles ever stated.

God says to the people through the prophet Haggai, "The reason you haven't been blessed is because you have been coming to Me with unclean hands and unclean hearts."

Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean [[Hag. 2:14](#)].

Their unclean hearts made their service for God unclean. This is the reason that an unsaved person can do nothing that is acceptable to God.

Now, you will find a difference of opinion among Bible expositors on [verses 15-19](#). Some hold that the verses review the condition of the returned remnant when they were indifferent to the Lord's house before they obeyed the Lord and began to build the temple. Other expositors hold that they refer to the people's discouragement after they had built the temple because it had not turned the tide of their misfortunes. Haggai tells them that there has not been time for the change to work, that evil has an infectious power greater than that of holiness and that its effects are more lasting.

However, it is my understanding that God is applying to Israel the great principle of the unclean defiling the clean to illustrate to them that although they had rebuilt the temple, their hearts were still far from Him, and He was not able to bless them.

And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD [[Hag. 2:15](#)].

He is saying that from this day on He is going to bless them because now they have turned to Him.

Since those days were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty.

I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid, consider it.

Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you [[Hag. 2:16-19](#)].

God says, "Now that your hearts are right before Me, I'll bless you." You see, they had rebuilt the temple and had been performing the services of the temple, yet that alone was not enough. In fact, when God had sent them into captivity, they had been going through the temple services. The problem was that their hearts were not right.

My friend, one of the ways that you can make your church a good church -- that is, if you have a Bible-teaching preacher -- is to go there all prayed up and confessed up and repented up and cleaned up. Then you won't block any blessing that might come to the church that day. Remember that when the unclean touches the clean, what happens is that the clean becomes unclean. Your heart has to be right with God before there is blessing. This is a tremendous principle. I know of nothing more practical.

### **Revelation Of God's Program (2:20-22)**

And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying [[Hag. 2:20](#)].

"The four and twentieth day of the month" is the same day on which the previous message was given -- December 24. On one occasion I was asked why Haggai gave two messages on the same day, and I replied that probably it was because Haggai wanted to go home for Christmas -- so he gave both messages before he left. Well, some folk took me seriously, and I received a ten-page letter explaining that in Haggai's day they weren't celebrating Christmas yet! Another letter informed me that no one should ever celebrate Christmas! Well, the fact is that when I don't have the answer to a question, I generally give some facetious answer. And if you won't let this word get out, I'll confess to you that I don't know why Haggai gave two messages on a particular day -- but here they are.

Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth [[Hag. 2:21](#)].

"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah." This message is to the civil ruler, the man in the kingly line of David, and it is God's promise to him.

And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother [[Hag. 2:22](#)].

"I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen [the nations]." When God says that He will shake the heavens and the earth and will overthrow the ruling governments, He is speaking of the Great Tribulation period, as He did in [verses 6](#) and 7 of this chapter. He says that He "will overthrow the chariots," because it was that in which the people trusted; in our day it is nuclear weapons. God says, "I am going to remove all of that."

### **Expectation For The Future (2:23)**

In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts [[Hag. 2:23](#)].

"In that day" -- notice it is not "in this day." It looks forward to the end times. "I . . . will make thee as a signet." The signet was the mark and identification of royalty. A man used it to sign letters and documents. Since it represented him, he guarded it very carefully and usually wore it. It came to represent a most prized possession.

"I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts." As we have seen, Zerubbabel is in the line of David. God's promise is that not only will the Messiah come through David, He will also come through Zerubbabel. Although the name Zerubbabel (Zorobabel) appears in the genealogy of both Matthew and Luke, the one in Matthew is, of course, an entirely different man. God made good His promise to Zerubbabel. The Lord Jesus Christ is just as much the Son of Zerubbabel as He is the Son of David.

The prophecy looks forward to the day when the Lord Jesus will come at the end of the Great Tribulation period. And God intends to put this line of Zerubbabel, this line of David, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the throne of the universe. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He will come to the earth to rule. This little Book of Haggai puts Christ in His proper position as the moral ruler, the civil ruler, and the King to rule over this earth in that day, which makes this an important book.

Now it is true that the little temple built in Haggai's day, which became known as Zerubbabel's temple, was not very impressive. But it is very important because it is in the line of temples into which the Messiah Himself will come some day.

Someone has poetically summarized the message of this little Book of Haggai. I regret that I do not know the author, but I shall quote it as we conclude this study --

Mid blended shoutings of joy and grief were laid  
The stones whereon the exile's hopes were based.  
Then foes conspired. The king his course retraced,  
His throne against the enterprise arrayed.  
And now self-seeking, apathy, invade  
All hearts. The pulse grows faint, the will unbraced.  
They rear their houses, let God's house lie waste.  
So heaven from dew and earth from fruit are stayed.  
There comes swift messenger from higher court,  
With rugged message, of divine import: --  
"Your ways consider; be ye strong and build;  
With greater glory shall this house be filled."  
He touched their conscience, and their spirit stirred

To nerve their hands for work, their loins regird.  
-- Author unknown

My friend, again let me say this: Who in our day is going to determine who is doing the great work and who is doing the small work? Your Sunday school class or other seemingly insignificant ministry may be far more important than an impressive work that is well known in our day. Only God can know the importance of it. Let's be found faithful, and then let's work. This is the message of the little Book of Haggai.

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